ANECDOTES OF PIOUS MEN

by:

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TEHRAN -IRAN

Some selected Islamic stories from the Persian
Book *Dastan-e Rdstdn vol. l & 2.*

First edition *1394/1974,*
Fifth edition *1403/1983,*
Sixth edition *1422/2000.*

E-mail: wofis@wofis.com
http: //www.wofis.com/

Translated and published by
World Organization for Islamic Services,
P. 0. Box 11365-1545,
Tehran - 15837,
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN.

In the Name of Allah,
The All-compassionate, The All-merciful

Praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of all being;
the All-compassionate, the All-merciful;
the Master of the Day of Judgement;
Thee only we serve, and to Thee alone we pray for succour;
Guide us in the straight path;
the path of those whom Thou hast blessed,
not of those against whom Thou art wrathful,
nor of those who are astray.

O' Allah! send your blessings to the head of your messengers and the last of your prophets,
Muhammad and his pure and cleansed progeny.
Also send your blessings to all your prophets and envoys.

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ
مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ
اِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ
أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

اللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى
سَيِّدِ رُسُلِكَ وَخَاتَمِ أَنْبِيَائِكَ
مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ
وَصَلِّ عَلَى جَمِيعِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ

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THE STRANGER

Tired and exhausted with the water-skin on her back, she was gasping and going towards her house where innocent children, their eyes fixed at the door, were eagerly waiting for the arrival of their mother. On her way, an unknown man approached her. He took the water-skin from her and placed it on his back. The door opened and the children saw their mother entering the house with a stranger. He placed the water-skin on the ground and said:

"Well, it seems you don't have anyone to fetch water for you; how come you are so forlorn?"

"My husband was a soldier; Ali sent him to the frontier where he was killed. Now I am alone with these little children."

The stranger said no more. Bowing down his head he went away. But the thought of the helpless window and orphans remained in his mind. He

could hardly sleep in the night. Early in the morning he picked up a basket; put some meat, flour and dates in it; went straight to her house and knocked at the door.

"Who are you?"

"I am the man who brought your water yesterday. Now I have brought some food for the children"

"May God bless you and judge between us and Ali"

She opened the door. Entering the house he said:

"I wish to do some good acts. Either let me knead the flour and bake the bread or allow me to look after the children."

"Very well, but I can do the job of kneading and cooking better than you. You take care of the children till I finish cooking"

She went to knead the flour Immediately he

grilled some meat which he had brought and fed the children saying to each child while putting morsel in his mouth:

"My son, forgive Ali if he has failed in his duty towards you"

The flour got ready; she called: "Gentlemen! put fire in the oven:" He went and put fire in the oven. When flames rose up, he brought his face near the fire and said, "Taste the heat of fire. It is the punishment for those who fail in their duty towards orphans and widows."

By chance, a woman from the neighbouring house came in. Recognizing the stranger, she cried: "Woe, don't you recognize the man who is helping you? He is Amirul-Muumineen (commander of the faithfuls) Ali bin Abi-Talib."

The widow came forward and shamefacedly cried: "Curse and shame to me. I beg your pardon:"

"No, I beg your pardon for I failed in my duty towards you."

JOWAIBER AND ZALFA

"How beautiful it were if you could marry and establish a family, ending this forlorn and isolated life? You could fulfil your natural urges and also she could help you in your temporal and spiritual needs and goals."

"O Messenger of Allah, I have neither wealth nor beauty; nor I have a noble descent or lineage. Who will marry me? And which woman likes to be wife of a poor, short, black and ugly man like me?"

"O Jowaiber! God has changed the individual's worth through Islam. Many people were high-placed in the pre-Islamic society and Islam brought them down. Many were despised non-entities and Islam bestowed them with honour and high rank and brought them up. Islam abolished the un-Islamic discrimination and pride of lineage. Now all people irrespective of their colour and origin are equal. Nobody has superiority over others but

through piety and obedience to Allah. Among the Muslims, only that person would be higher than you whose virtues and deeds are better than you. Now do as I tell you."

These words were exchanged one day between the Prophet and Jowaiber when the Prophet came to see the people of "Suffa"

Jowaiber was a native of "Yamamah" where he came to know about the Prophet and the advent of Islam. He was poor, black and short, but at the same time intelligent truth seeking and a man of determination. He came to Medina to look at Islam from near; in a short time he embraced Islam. Since he had neither money, house nor any friends, he temporarily was accommodated along with other poor Muslims in the Mosque by permission of the Prophet. When it was revealed unto the Prophet that the Mosque was not a place of habitation, it became necessary to shift them elsewhere. The Prophet selected a site outside the Mosque and

erected a shed for them. The place was named as "Suffa" and the residents were known as "Ashab-e-Suffa" - all of them poors from places far away from Medina.

The Prophet came to visit them one day. Noticing Jowaibir among them he decided to bring him out of this forlorn life. It was beyond the fancy of Jowaiber to own a house and have a wife in his condition. And that was why he replied to the Prophet as to how it was possible for anyone to accept him in matrimony when the Prophet advised him to marry. But the Prophet removing his doubts, explained to him the changes brought about in the social outlook of the people by Islam.

After bringing Jowaiber out of his inferiority complex, he directed him to the house of Ziad ibne Lubaid to request him for his daughter's hand in marriage.

Ziad was one of the wealthiest persons of

Medina and commanded high respect among his tribes. When Jowaiber entered his house, he was surrounded by his relatives and some of his tribesmen. Jowaiber took a seat, paused for a moment and then raising his head said, "I have brought a message from the Prophet. Do you like to hear it confidentially or openly?"

Ziad: ; "A message from the Prophet is an honour to me, better you tell it openly."

"The Prophet has sent me to request you for your daughter for myself"

"Did he himself make this suggestion to you?"

"I don't speak on my own accord. Everybody knows me, I am not a liar"

"Strange! We don't give our daughters to persons of unequal status nor outside our tribe. You go back I shall go to the Prophet and have a talk with him myself."

Jowaiber left the house murmuring, "By God, whatever the Qur'an teaches and whatever is the

purpose of the prophet-hood of Muhammad is totally against what Ziad says"

Those nearby heard the murmurings of Jowaibir.

Zalfa, the lovely daughter of Ziad, and the beauty-queen of Medina, heard these words of Jowaiber. She came to her father and asked:

"Father, what was that man who just went out saying? And what did he mean?"

"He had come to ask for your hand in marriage and was claiming that the Prophet had sent him for this purpose."

"Isn't it possible that he had really sent him, and thus your rejection may amount to disobedience of the Prophet's order ?"

"What do you feel about it?"

"I feel you should bring him back before he reaches to the Prophet, and then go yourself to find out the truth."

He brought Jowaiber back to his house with

due respect, and then himself hurried up to the Prophet.   When he saw him he said:

"O Messenger of God, Jowaiber came to my house and brought such and such a message from you. I would like to inform you that our custom is to give our daughters to persons of equal status and belonging to our tribe, who are all your healpers and companions."

"O Ziad, Jowaiber is a Faithful man. That dignity and honour which you are talking about has now been abrogated. Every Believer man is equal (for marriage purpose) to every Believer woman."

Ziad returned to his house and explain d the matter to his daughter. She said, "Please do not reject the proposal put by the Prophet. This matter concerns me. I accept Jowaiber whatever his condition may be. If the Prophet is pleased with it, I am also pleased."

The wedding was duly soleminized. Ziad paid "Mahr" (Marriage) from his own wealth and offered good articles to the pair. They asked the bridegroom, "Have you got a house where to take the bride?" He said, "No, I had never thought that I would get a wife and sattle in domestic life. It was the Prophet who came suddenly and had a talk with me and sent me to Ziad's house."

Ziad arranged for him a house equipped with complete house-hold effects, and transferred the bride superbly adorned with ornaments and perfumes.

Night came. Jowaiber did not know where was the house meant for him. He was guided to the house and led to the bridal-chamber. When he saw the house and its equipments and looked at the dazzling bride, his past came to his mind and he said to himself, "How poor I was when I entered this city. had nothing - neither money nor beauty, neither any lineage nor family - now God made

these affluences available to me through Islam. Indeed it is Islam that has brought such changes in the social outlook of the people beyond any imagination. How grateful I am to God for bestowing upon me all these Blessings!"

In spiritual ecstasy he went to a corner of the room; spent the night in recitation of the Qur'an and prayer. It was dawn when he came to himself and then decided to fast in gratitude to God. When women came to see Zalfa in the morning they found her untouched. They kept the matter secret from Ziad. Two nights and days passed in the same manner. He was fasting during days and praying during nights. The women of the family of the bride were worried. They thought perhaps Jowaiber was impotent and had no need for a woman. At last, they put the matter before Ziad. He informed the Prophet; the Prophet; called Jowaiber and asked, "Don't you have any desire for woman?"

"Incidentally, I have very intense desire of that kind:"

"Then why didn't you go near your bride?"

"O Prophet of God, when I entered the house I found myself amidst that affluence. ,A state of gratitude and devotion took me over. I thought it necessary to offer thanks and prayers to Allah before doing anything. Tonight I shall go near my wife."

Jowaiber and Zalfa lived a most happy life. When the call for a Jihad (Holy war) came, he participated in it with the enthusiasm typical of a brave Muslim, and achieved martyrdom under the banner of Islam.

After his martyrdom, Zalfa was the most saught after woman for a wife and people were eager to pay the greatest Mahr for her.

THE NEW CONVERT

Two neighbours, a Muslim and a Christian, were on friendly terms. Having concern for one another they used to enquire after each others health, and exchanged views from time to time. The Muslim being a devout and religious man spoke high of his religion and the result was that the Christian. friend embraced Islam.

The night passed and it was nearing dawn. The Christian, a new convert, heard somebody ramming his door. Surprised and restless he shouted:

"Who is it?"

From the back came a loud voice, "I am so and so;" introducing himself. He was the Muslim neighbour who had the honour of converting him to Islam.

"What do you want at this late hour?"

"Be quick, put on your clothes and perform ablution, so that we should go to the Mosque together"

The new Muslim performed ablution (Wudu) for the first time in his life and set out to Mosque behind his Muslim friend. They had arrived before time. It was the time for the Recommended (not obligatory) prayer after mid-night. They prayed till dawn - the time came for the morning prayer. They prayed the morning prayer and were engaged in benedictions and invocations till it became perfactly clear. When the new Muslim made a move towards the door, his friend interrupted:

"Where are you going?"

"I am going home, Since I have finished my morning prayer, there is nothing else to do now."

"Wait a while and recite the benedictions till the sun rises."

"very well."

He sat and recited the same till the sun rose. When he rose up to go, his friend placed the Qur'an in his hand saying, "Read it till the sun rises a little high. And I advise you to fast today. Don't you know how much virtues and rewards there are in fasting?" The new Muslim did as he was told, and sat reciting the Our'an till it was nearing noon. The Muslim neighbour said: "Now it is almost noon; better we perform the noon-prayer in the Mosque:" So, the Dohr (noon) prayer was prayed. Then he said again: "After just a short time, the Asr (after-noon) prayer will be prayed. We should perform that also at the proper time:" That prayer was also performed. Then he said, "It is almost evening now" and detained the new convert till it was time for Maghrib (evening) prayer. When he rose up to break his fast, the neighbour said, "there is one more prayer remaining. It is named "Esha" or the sleeping-time prayer'." So they waited nearly one hour for the proper time of this prayer. After that the new Muslim got up and went away.

Next day at the same hour of night he again heard knockings at the door.

"Who is there?"

"I am so and so............ your neighbour. Be quick, put on your clothes and perform ablution to go to the Mosque together"

"As soon as I returned from the Mosque last night, I resigned from your religion. Please go away and find some other idle man who has nothing to do in this world, so that he may be able to spend his whole time in the mosque. I am a poor man having wife and children to feed. I should better go after my work to earn my livelihood'."

Imam Jaafer al-Sadiq relating the story to his friends and companions, said: "In this manner a devout man after converting a new Muslim, had himself kicked him out of Islam. You must bear this fact in mind and should not trouble the people unnecessarily. You should judge their strength and

capacity and act accordingly, so that they develop affinity for the religion and do not run away from it. Don't you know that the policy of Ummayyads is based on violence, oppression and intimidation whereas our ways and methods are based on leniency, brotherhood and persuation"

NASIBA

The deep scar on the shoulder of Nasiba, daughter of Kaab, spoke of a major wound in the past. Whenever the women, specially of the younger generation who had not seen the time of the Prophet or were too small at that time, noticed the cavity in her shoulder, they enquired with extreme curiousity about the frightening incident which had resulted in the injury to her shoulder. They loved to hear her adventures in the battle of Uhud from her own mouth.

She had never imagined that she would fight shoulder to shoulder with her husband and two sons defending the Prophet in the battle of Uhud. She had only taken the water-skin on her back so that she could provide water to the injured and also had taken some home-made bandages to dress their wounds. She had not thought of herself as worthy of any other work on that day.

Although the Muslims were small in number and had only a limited supply of equipments, they gave a grand defeat to the enemy who took to their heels vacating the battle field. But soon after, due to the negligance of some men guarding the "Ainain Hills;" the enemy made a surprise attack from the rear,turning the victory of the Muslims into defeat. The Muslims surrounding the Prophet fled away, leaving him almost alone in the battlefield.

When Nasiba saw this precarious situation, she put the water-skin on the ground, and took a sword in her hand. She fought with the sword and also made good use of bows and arrows; and took a shield left over by a fleeing soldier. Once she noticed a man shouting: "Where is Mohammad himself?" She approached him immediately and inflicted a few blows on him; but he was double-armoured and her attacks had not much effect on him. He then inflicted such a heavy blow on the shoulder of the armourless woman that it required treatment

for one year. Noticing a stream of blood gushing from her shoulder, the Prophet called to one of her sons to immediately dress her wound. He put a bandage over her shoulder and she again got busy in the battle.

Meanwhile one of her sons got injured. She took out a bandage and dressed his wound. The Prophet watching the scene smiled at the heroism of this woman. After dressing her son's wound she instructed him to get going for the battle. These words were still in her mouth when the Prophet pointed out a man to her and told her that he was the same man who had injured her son. She attacked the man like a lioness and inflicted her sword on his leg. He fell on the ground. The Prophet said, "Well, thou hast taken thy revenge. Thanks for God who gave the victory on him and made thy eyes cool."

Many Muslims were martyred and wounded. She herself was severely wounded and there was

no hope of her life. After the battle of Uhud, the Prophet ordered the wounded Muslims to persue the enemy upto Hamra-ul-Asad, to be sure of their intention and condition. Nasiba also wanted to accompany them but the deep injuries did not allow her to do so. On returning from Hamra-ul-Asad, the Prophet before reaching his house, sent someone to enquire about her health and was pleased to learn that she was alive.

COMPLAINT AGAINST HUSBAND

Ali during the days of his Khilafat used to personally listen to the grievances and complaints of the people. Once, the days were hot and people did not venture out of their houses after mid-day. Ali sat everyday outside his house under the shade of a wall so that if someone had any complaints, could lodge the same to him directly. Sometimes he walked in lanes and streets observing the general condition of the people.

One day he returned to his residence tired and sweating, and found a woman waiting. Seeing him, she came near and said:

"I am in trouble. My husband oppresses me. He has turned me out from the house and has threatened to beat me. If I go to him he will beat me. I request you to do justice between us"

"O Servant of Allah, it is too hot now. Wait till it cools down in the afternoon. Then I shall come with you and redress your grievances"

"If I stay out too long, I am afraid it may increase his anger:"

For a moment he bowed his head and then raised it up saying to himself, "No, By God, justic ; to the oppressed should not be delayed. The right of the oppressed should certainly be taken from the oppressor; and every fear should be taken out from her heart so that she may stand boldly before the oppressor and demand her right'."

"Tell me where is your house?"
"It is in such and such place."
"Let us go."

He accompanied her to her house, stood at the door and called loudly, "O Master of the house! Peace be upon thee."

A young man came out. He was her husband. He did not recognize Ali. He found that an old man of about sixty years had accompanied her and assumed that she had brought him for support and

mediation; but he kept silent.

"This lady has a complaint against you. She says that you have oppressed her and have ousted her from the house. Besides you have threatened to beat her. I have come here to tell you to fear Allah and be kind to your wife."

"In what way does it concern you if I have not treated my wife well. Yes, I had threatened to beat her, but now, since she has brought you to plead for her, I shall throw her into fire and burn her alive."

Ali was disturbed by the impudence of the man. Drawing out his sword he said, "I am only advising you to do good and admonishing you from bad deeds; but you are replying me in such manner clearly saying to burn this woman in fire. Do you think there is no authority in this world?"

His loud voice drew the attention of the passers by, and a huge crowd gathered. Whoever came

bowed down with reverence before the old man and saluted him by saying "Peace be on you O Commander of the Fiathfuls"

When the rude young man realised as to whom he was talking with, he trembled and supplicated, "O Ameerul Moumineen! forgive me. I confess my faults and promise that henceforth I shall obey my wife."

Ali turned to the woman and told her to go in the house and cautioned her not to behave in such a manner that her husband had to be angry again.

THE SON OF HATIM

Before the advent of Islam, there were in Arabia autonomous tribal chiefs. The people were used to the rule of their chiefs and obeyed them; and often paid them tributes and taxes. The well-known generous Hatim, of the tribe of Tai, was one of the tribal chiefs of Arabia. His son, Adi, succeeded him after his death and the Tribe submitted to his rule. He was taxing them to the extent of one-fourth of their income every year. His lordship coincided with the advent of the Prophet. The Tai tribes were idol-worshippers, but himself was a Christian, but kept his beliefs secret from his people. The people, after being acquainted with the liberal teachings of Islam, felt themselves relieved from the burden of their lords who had hitherto imposed their rule upon the people. Owing to this fact, Adi, like other lords used to look upon Islam as the greatest danger for himself; and was harbouring enmity against the Prophet. But the die

was cast. People were embracing Islam in increasingly large numbers; and the religion of Allah was advancing day by day. He knew that the day was near when the Muslims would come looking for him also, and that would be the end of his lordship. He therefore, instructed his special steward, a slave, to always keep strong and light-footed camels ready near his camp and to remain watchful.

One day the slave came to him and said, "Make whatever arrangements you want to make as the Muslims are very close." Adi mounted his family on the camels and took whatever valuables and luggage he could take, and escaped to Damascus where the people were of his religion. But in the confusion, he forgot to take his sister, Safana with him; and she was left behind.

The Muslims defeated the tribe in the battle; and some were made captives. Muslims brought Safana to Medina alongwith other captives and related the story of Adi's escapade to the Prophet.

The prisoners were sheltered in a low-walled compound near the Mosque. One day, the Prophet, while going to the Mosque passed beside the enclosure. Safana, intelligent and talkative as she was, moved from her place and said:

"My father is dead; my guardian is hiding; be generous to me, God will be generous to you."

Prophet: "Who is your guardian?"

"Adi, son of Hatim"

"The one who has run away from God and His Prophet?"

Saying these words the Prophet went away. Next day again she repeated the same words, heard the same reply. Her plea produced no result. The third day, having lost her hopes, she decided to keep silent. But a young man walking behind the Prophet made signs to her to repeat her demand. She repeated the same words. The Prophet said, "Very well, I am waiting for some reliable man from your tribe. As soon as such a man is found I

shall send you with him to your tribe. Inform me if you find such a person who has come to Medina"

She asked the people who was the young man walking behind the Prophet who had encouraged her to repeat her demand. They said he was Ali.

After some time, Saffana informed the Prophet that some men of her tribe had came to Medina. The Prophet gave her a new dress, some cash for meeting the expense of the journey and a camel to ride on. She went along with them to her brother in Syria.

When she saw her brother, she reproached him and said, "You brought out your wife and children forgot me the memory of your father!" Adi appologised to her. Then, as she was an intelligent woman, Adi consulted her about his plan. He asked

"What do you advise me to do, since you have seen Mohammed from near? Should I join him or

keep aloof from him?"

"I believe you should join him. If he is a Prophet of God it will be a credit to your honour and nobleness. And if he is not a prophet, and only wants to be a worldly ruler, then in a place (Medina) which is not far from Yemen (your place), nobody will dare to dishonour you, because of the honour and respect you have among the people of Yemen. Either way, your honour is guaranteed."

The idea appealed to Adi. He decided to go to Medina and to observe the Prophet's manners minutely. If he was a prophet he would follow him like other Muslims. But in case he was only a man with worldly ambitions of power and pelf, then he would cooperate with him to the extent of the common benefits of both.

He entered the Mosque of Medina and saluted to the Prophet. The Prophet accorded him due respect and took him to his house.

On their way a haggard woman caught hold of the garmet of the Prophet and entered into a discussion with him. A long time passed; and the Prophet answered all her questions with kindness and patience.

Adi said to himself, "This is the one sign from the character of this man that he is a prophet. People having worldly ambitions do not have such a disposition and temperament of replying to a poor old woman with so much patience and kindness"

When they entered the house Adi found his life most simple and unpretentious. There was only a quilt which the Prophet used to sit upon, but now he spread it for Adi to sit. Adi insisted that the Prophet should sit upon the quilt; but he flatly refused. Ultimately, Adi sat upon the quilt and the Prophet sat on the ground. Adi said to himself, "This is the second sign of the character of this man, This is the character of the Prophets, not of the kings"

The Prophet turned to him and said, "But was not your religion Christianity?" Adi said "Yes, why?" The Prophet said, "then why, and on what grounds, were you taking one-fourth of the income of your people? Is it not inadmissible in your religion?"

Adi, who had kept his religion secret even from his closest relatives, was surprised to hear it from the Prophet. He said to himself, "this is the third sign that this man is a prophet."

Then the Prophet said: "You are looking at the present poverty and helplessness of the Muslims. You find that the Muslims today are living in distress. They are surrounded by crowds of enemies and have no security of their lives and properties. They have no power in their hands. By God, the time is not far when such a vast wealth will come to them that there will be no poor among them. By God. their enemies will be vanguished and there will exist such a perfect peace and order that a

woman shall be able to travel from Iraq to Hijaz alone and nobody will trouble her. By God, the time is near when the white palaces of Babylonia will come under the hands of the Muslims"

Adi embraced Islam with perfect Faith and Sincerity, and remained faithful to the end of his life. He lived upon the years after the Holy Prophet. He always remembered the talks of the Holy Prophet in his first meeting with him, and the forecasts at that time, about the future of Muslims. He used to say, "By God, in my life-time I saw Muslim conquering the white palaces of Babylonia, and there is such a peace and order that a woman can travel from Iraq to Hijaz without anybody troubling her. By God, I am sure a day will come when there will be no poor among the Muslims"

IBNE SAYYABA

Ibne Sayyaba, a resident of Kufa, was a young man whose father had died. The tragedy of the death of his father, coupled with poverty and unemployment, was destroying the soul of the sensitive man. One day while sitting in his house, he heard a knock at the door. He was a friend of his father. After offering his condolences, he said:

"Did your father leave anything for you?"

"No"

"Then take this thousand Dirham; try to turn it into a capital, and meet your expenses from its profit."

Saying these words he went away. Ibne Sayyaba, happy as he was, went to his mother and showing the money told her the story. The same day, he used the money in purchasing some merchandise and opening a shop; and set his heart to it. He made a rapid progress. Soonafter he realised

that not only he had met his household expenses from the profit, but even the capital had increased to a great extent. Now he thought of performing pilgrimage, and approached his mother for her advice. She said, "First you should repay the thousand Dirham which has brought such prosperity to us, and then you may go to Mecca."

He went to see the friend of his father, and placing a purse of one thousand Dirham before him, said, "Please accept your money back" The man thought that Ibne Sayyaba was returning the same money because it was not sufficient for any trade. So he said:

"If the amount is insufficient I can increase it"

"Good God, it was not insufficient. It has brought great prosperity to us and since I am now quite well off financially, I have come to repay your money, and to express my thanks to you, particularly when I have decided to go on pilgri-

mage.

He came to his home and packed his luggage for Mecca.

After performance of the holy *Hajj,* he came to Medina and went to see Imam Sadique (a.s.) alongwith other pilgrims. There was a huge crowd in the house of the Imam (a.s.). Being young he chose to sit at the far end of the gathering, and from there watched the people coming and going; and heard their questions and the answers given by the Imam. When the house became nearly empty, the Imam (a.s.) pointed to him and said:

"What can I do for you?"

"I am Abdur Rahman, son of Sayyaba, of Kufa (from the tribe of Bijilly)"

"How is your father?"

"He died"

"Ah! Ah! May God have His mercy upon him. Did he leave anything for you?"

"No, he didn't"

"Then how could you perform pilgrimage?"

"After the death of my father we were in distress. On one side his death and on the other side poverty and unemployment, were crushing us extremely. Then one day a friend of my father gave me one thousand Dirham and advised me to invest the amount in business. I followed his advice and from its profit I came to perform pilgrimage."

Before he could finish his story, the Imam (a.s.) said, "Tell me what did you do about the money of your father's friend?"

I refunded the amount on the advice of my mother before coming out for Hajj'.'

"Very good. Do you like me to give you an advice?"

"May I be your ransom; of course"

"Be truthful and righteous. A truthful and righteous man is a partner in the wealth of others."

AQUEEL AS A GUEST OF ALI

Aqueel arrived as a guest at the Government House in the days of the Caliphate of his brother, Ali. Ali made a sign to his elder son Hassan to offer a garment to his uncle. Hassan presented to him a robe and a cloak. The night came; the weather was warm. They were sitting on roof-top having amiable talks. It was time for dinner. Aqueel considered himself to be the guest of the Absolute ruler of the Muslim world and expected an extraordinarily colourful and rich dinner. But to his surprise it was the most ordinary and simple one. He said: "Is this all the food?"

Ali: "Isn't it a God's gift? I heartily thank Almighty God that he has bestowed me with this gift."

Aqueel: "Then I should better tell you my needs at once, and be on my way soon. I am in debt. Please order to pay off my debt as soon as possible; and also help your poor brother as much

as you can, so that I return to my place relieved of my burdens:"

"How much is your debt?"

"One hundred thousand Dirham"

"Oh! One hundred thousand Dirham! So large? I am sorry, brother. I don't have so much money to give you; but wait till the time comes for the disbursement of stipends. I shall withdraw my personal share and give from it to you, thus fulfilling my duty of cooperation and brotherhood towards you. If my family and children were not in need of their own expenses, I would have given you my entire share"

"What?! ! Should I wait till the payment of stipends? You have the state-treasury in your hand and still you are asking me to wait till the time of disbursement and then only you will give me from your personal share! You can withdraw any amount you want from the State Treasury. So, why are you making me wait till then? Besides, what is your total share from it? Even if you give me the your entire share, how far will it relieve me

of my trouble?"

"I am surprised to hear your proposal. What concern it does it, is of me or you whether there is money in the Treasury or not? We are just like any other Muslims. True, you are my brother and I must help you as much as possible, but from my personal money, not from the public treasury"

The argument continued and Aqueel pleaded with Ali in various ways. He continued to insist that Ali should give him from state treasury. The place where they were sitting overlooked the market of Kufa, and they could see the cash-boxes of the shop-keepers. Ali said, "If you still insist and are not ready to listen to me, then I have got another proposal for you. If you follow it you can repay all your loan and still have plenty of money left'."

"What is that?"

"Down over there are cash-boxes. As soon as the market is closed and nobody is there, go down and break open the boxes. And take whatever you

want'.'

"Whose boxes are they?"

"They belong to the people of this market. They keep their cash in them:"

"Strange! You are telling me to steal the money of poor people who have earned it with their hard labour and have gone home leaving it there trusting in God?"

"Then why are you urging me to open the boxes of the state-treasury for you? Whom does it belong to? This also belongs to the same people who are asleep in their houses carefree and in comforts. All right, I have another suggestion. Follow it if you like."

"What's that?"

"If you are ready then pick up your sword and so will do I. The old city of Hirah is not far from here. There are leading merchants and wealthy people there. We make a surprise attack on one of them during night and bring out enormous wealth with us."

"Brother, I haven't come here for theft and robbery that you are suggesting these things to me. I am only asking you to instruct the officials of the treasury to give me the money which is in your power, so that I may repay my debt:"

"Suppose that we steal the property of an individual, isn't it better that stealing from the property of millions of Muslims? How is it that taking the property of an individual with sword is robbery, and usurping the property of the general public is not? You are under the impression that robbery only means attacking some individual and taking his property by force. The worst type of robbery is the same thing which you are proposing to me to do now."

THE FIRST SLOGAN

News leaking now and then from Mecca to the tribe of Bani Ghefar had attracted the mind of Abi Zar, a man of an inquisitive nature. He want to reach to the depth of those developments in Mecca , but the distorted news occasionally obtained from the individuals, were not making any sense to him. The only definite thing known to him was that a new voice has arise in Mecca, and the Meccans were striving hard to silence it. But what was that new voice and why the Meccans were opposing it? These were the questions which remained unanswered. His brother was going to Mecca. He told him, "People tell me that a man has appeared in Mecca and has brought some new talks, and claim they have been revealed unto him from God. Since you are going to Mecca, investigate into the same; and bring me the correct information."

Days passed; he eagerly waited for his brother; when he came back, Abu Zar asked him:

"What is the news, and how the things stand there?"

"So far as I could gather he is a man who invites people towards good morals. He has also hrought some talk which is not poetry."

"I had wanted you to make a more thorough investigation. This much information is not enough for my purpose. Better I should go there personally to find out the truth:"

He put up some provision on his back and straight away came to Mecca. He was determined to meet the man who had brought the new talks and to hear the words from his own mouth. But he neither knew him nor thought it prudent to enquire about him from someone else. The atmoshere in Mecca was tense with oppression and intimidation. Without making his intention known to anyone, he was looking in all directions, listening to the gossip of the people around him hoping that it might provide him a `clue.' The Masjidul Haram was the centre of news and events. Hence

he came there with his baggage on the back. The day turned into night, but he could find no clue. Night passed a little; he stretched himself there. Soonafter a youngman passed nearby. He looked at Abu Zar with searching eyes, and went away. His glance seemed to him very meaningful. It occured to him that perhaps that youngman was the right person to divulge his secret to. He followed him but came back not daring to speak to him.

Next day also he sat whole day in Masjidul Haram alert looking to every possible clue; but in vain. The night befell and he again stretched on the same spot. The same youth appeared again and respectfully said, "Has the time not come for you to come to your house and spend the night there?" Saying this he took him to his house. Abu Zar did not divulge his secret that night, nor did the youth ask him. Early morning Abu Zar said good-bye to him and came to the mosque after his pursuit. That day also turned into night and he

could not make out anything from the talks of the people. The youngman again appeared and took him to his house; but this time he broke the silence:

"Can you tell me why you have come to this city?"

"I shall tell you if you promise to help me"

"I promise I shall do my best to help you"

"The fact is that we have been hearing among our tribes that a man has appeared in Mecca and has brought some talks claiming the same to be revealed unto him from God. I have come so that I may see him and may investigate about him. Firstly, tell me what do you believe about him? secondly, can you guide me to him?"

"Rest assured he is on right and what he says is from God. I shall take you to him in the morning. But as you are aware if these people came to know about it your life as well as mine will be in danger. Tomorrow morning I shall walk ahead and you follow me at a distance. If I will see any

danger I shall stand and bow towards the earth like a man emptying a pot; then you must be off. If there is no danger you will follow me where-ever I go".

Next morning the youth who was none else than Ali appeared from his house, Abu Zar following him. Fortunately the way was clear and they reached the house of the prophet safely.

He made a thorough study of the manners of the Prophet and also listened to the verses of the Qur'an. Not much time has passed that he embraced Islam very enthusiastically. He made a convent with the Prophet that he would not listen to any reproach in the way of Allah during his whole life and would speak truth even though it might be bitter for some tastes.

The Prophet said: "Now go back to your tribes and invite them towards Islam till you receive my next order" He said, "Very well; but before leaving

this city I shall go before these people and will announce before them the slogan of Islam, come what may."

He went straight to the heart of the City, i.e. the Mosque and cried before the congregation of Quraish: أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

"(1 bear witness that there is no god but Allah and Mohammad is His Servant and Messenger)."

Hearing this slogan from the stranger, Meccans rushed at him immediately and had Abbas son of Abdul Muttalib not come to his rescue they would have torn him to pieces. Abbas said, "This man is from the tribe of Ghefar, and the trade caravan of Quraish plying between Mecca and Syria passes through their lands. Don't you think if you kill one of their men, you will never again be allowed to pass through their land safely?"

Abu Zar was rescued from their hands. However, he was not satisfied. He said, "Once again I

shall repeat this slogan. Let these people hear what they don't like to hear at all. If they hear it again and again they will become used to it."

So, next day he repeated the same slogan. Again the people attacked him and Abbas who was present there saved him from their atrocities.

After that, according to the order of the Prophet, he returned home and started preaching Islam among his tribe. When the Prophet migrated to Medina, Abu Zar too went to him and remained in Medina almost to the end of his life. He was extremely frank and owing to this virtuous attributes he was exiled during the Caliphate of Othman, first to Syria and later at a place named Rabza near Medina. There he died a lonely death. The Prophet had said about him

"May God bless Abu Zar! he will live alone, will die alone and shall be brought up alone on the Day of Resurrection."

THE PROHIBITION OF WATER

Moawiya was ruling over Syria as its governor for nearly sixteen years; and was secretly planning to grab the Caliphate taking advantage of every possible opportunity. The best excuse for him to revolt against the Central authority and declare his own caliphate was the Othman's murder. He had not done any thing concerning the appeals of Othman for help, during his life time. In fact, he was waiting for him to be murdered, so that he could make it an excuse for his scheme. Othman got murdered and Moawiya immediately sought to exploit the situation for his own purpose.

On the other hand, people after the murder of Othman rallied behind Ali (who because of various reasons, was reluctant to take the responsibility of Caliphate) and declared their allegience to him. Observing that the responsibility was now formally turned to him, he accepted it and his Caliphate was

proclaimed in Medina, the capital and centre of Muslim world in those days. All provinces of Islamic government submitted to his obedience - with the exception of Syria which was under Moawiya. He refused allegience to Ali, accusing him of sheltering the murders of Othman. He recruited a large number of Syrian soldiers and made preparation for the declaration of independence of his provinces.

After settling the issue of the battle of Camel (JAMAL), Ali turned his attention to Moawiya. He wrote several letters to him, but in vain. Both sides moved their armies towards each another. Abul Aawar Salmi was leading Moawiya's advanced battalion and Malik Ashtar was in command of the advanced battalion of Ali. They met at the bank of the Euphrates. Ali's directive to Malik was not to be the first to attack. But Abul Aawar made a severe attack to intimidate the soldiers of Ali. Malik then pushed the Syrians far behind. Salmi now thought of another tactics. He reached the

Ghat, i.e. the slope on bank of the Euphrates which was the only spot convenient to fetch water. He deployed his spearmen and archers to guard the spot and prevent Malik and his company from coming near it. Soonafter, Moawiya himself arrived with a large army. Happy at the strategy of his commander he further increased the number of the soldiers guarding the approach to river. Soldiers of Ali were put in distress owing to the shortage of water. Moawiya with pleasure said: "This is our first Victory'." Only one man, Amr bin Al-Aas, the shrewd minister of Moawiya did not think it a good policy. On the other side, Ali himself had arrived and was informed of the situation. He sent a letter with Saasa'a to Moawiya notifying:

"We have come here, but, as far as possible we do not like to wage a war of fratricide between the Muslims. We earnestly hope to settle our differences through negotiations and discussions. But we observe that you and your followers have started

using weapons of destruction before trying anything else. Besides, you have denied water on my companions. Instruct them to desist from this act, so that we can start negotiations. Of course, if you do not like anything but war, we are not afraid of

Moawiya consulted his advisor. The general opinion was to take advantage of the golden opportunity and ignore the letter. Only Amr bin Al Aas against this view. He said, "You are mistaken. The fact is that Ali and his men do not want to start the war themselves, and it is because of this that they are silent at present and have tried to dissuade you from your scheme through this letter. Do not think they will retreat if you ignore their letter and continue denying them the water. Because then they will take out arms and will not stop till they have driven you away from Euphrates with disgrace." But the majority of advisors was of the opinion that the denial of water would weaken the

enemy compelling them to retreat. Moawiya personally was in favour of this idea. Discussion came to end; Saasa'a asked for the reply; Moawiya, using the delaying tactics, said that he would send the reply afterwards. meanwhile, he ordered his soldiers guarding water to be extra alert and to prevent coming and going of the soldiers of Ali.

Ali was distressed at this development, because it brought to an end every hope of any amicable settlement through talks and negotiations, and showed that the opposite side was devoid of every goodwill. Now, the only way out was to use force He stood before his soldiers and delivered a short but forceful address, the contents of which were as follows:

"These people have started oppression, and opened the door of conflict and welcomed you with hostility. They are hungry for war and are demanding war and blood-shed from you. They have denied you water. Now you have to choose between the two paths. There is no third course.

Either accept the humiliation and oppression and remain thirsty as you are, or satisfy your thirsty swords with their dirty bloods so that. you may quench your thirst with the sweet water. Death is to live a defeated and disgraceful life; and Life is to be victorious even at the cost of death. Verily, Moawiya has gathered around him some ignorant and misguided mob; and is taking advantage of their ignorance, so that they are making their necks targets of the arrows of death."

This address moved the soldiers of Ali and stirred their blood. They made a severe attack and pushed the enemy far back and took the possession of (Shari'ah) Ghat.

Amr bin Al-Aas (whose forecast was now a fact) said to Moawiya: "Now, if Ali and his army pay you with your own coin what will you do? Can you take possession of the "Shariah" (Ghat) from them for the second time?" Moawiya said, "In your opinion, how will Ali deal with us now?"

"I believe, Ali will not behave as you had done. He will not deny us water. He has not come here for such deeds."

The soldiers of Ali after removing the soldiers of Moawiya from Ghat, asked his permission to prevent the enemy from taking water. Ali said, "Don't deny them water. These are the methods of ignorant. I do not set my hands to such acts. I am going to start negotiation with them on the basis of the Holy Book of God. If they accept my proposals, well and good; and if they refuse, I shall fight with them, but gentlemenly not by denying them water. I will never do such thing and will not oppress them by shortage of water'."

Not long afterwards soldiers of Moawiya used to come co the Ghat side by side with the soldiers of Ali, and nobody prevented them.

THE SILLY SHOP-KEEPER

A heavy built tall man was passing through the market of Kufa, his step firm and assured. He had fine figure and sun-burnt face; encounters of the battle-field had left their marks on him and the corner of one of his eyes was slit. A shop-keeper, to amuse his friends, threw a handful of sweepings onto the man. The man continued his walk in the same assured and firm manner, without raising an eye brow or looking towards the shop-keeper. When he went away, a friend of the shop keeper said:

"Do you know who the man is whom you have insulted just now?"

"No, I do not recognise him. He was a passer-by like thousands of people passing this way every-day. But tell me who was this man."

"Strange! Didn't you recognise him?! He was Malik Ashtar, the renowned Commander-in-Chief

of Ali."

"Strange! He was Malik Ashtar?! The same Malik whose bravery turns the heart of lion into water and mention of whose name makes his enemies tremble with fear?"

"Yes, that was Malik himself"

"Woe to me! What did I do? Now he will give order to punish me severely. I must run to him immediately to apologise and pray him to forgive my misbehaviour:"

He ran after Malik. He saw him turning towards a mosque. He followed him to the Mosque and saw that he had started praying. He waited till he finished his prayer Humbly introducing himself he told him:

"I am the man who had committed the silly prank and behaved disrespectfully to you"

Malik: "But, by Allah, I did not come in the mosque but for your sake; because I knew that you were a very ignorant and misguided man and that

you give trouble to the people without any cause. I felt pity on you and came here to pray for you and ask Allah to lead you onto the right path. No, I did not have any such intentions as you were afraid of "

WHAT DID HAPPEN TO THY SONS?

After the martyrdom of Ali and absolute domination of Moawiya over the Caliphate, willy-nilly contacts were taking place between him and the sincere followers of Ali. He tried hard to make them confess that they did not gain anything by their friendship with Ali. Obviously they had lost everything on the altar of that friendship. He longed to hear from their mouth atleast some expression of regret and remorse, but this wish never materialised. The followers of Ali, after his martyrdom, had become more and more aware of his virtues and greatness. Whatever their sacrifices during his lifetime, now they were doing more for his love, for his principles and for keeping his mission alive. They were having all kinds of hardship very courageously. And, as a result, the endeavours of Moawiya sometimes produced opposite results.

Adi son of Hatim, the paramount chief of the

Tai Tribe, was one of the devoted, sincere and knowledgeable followers of Ali. He had many sons. He, his sons and his tribe were always ready to sacrifice their all for Ali. His three sons named Tarfa, Turaif and Tarif were martyred in the war of Seffin under the banner of Ali. The time went on; Ali was martyred; Moawiya usurped the Caliphate; and once Adi came face to face with Moawiya.

To revive his sad memories and to make him confess how much harm had come to him in the friendship of Ali, Moawiya said:

"What happened to your three sons, Tarfa, Turaif and Tarif?"

"They were martyred in the battle of Seffin under the banner of Ali"

"Ali did not do justice to you"

"Why?"

"Because he threw your sons in the mouth of death and preserved his own sons in safety"

"I did not do justice to Ali"

"Why?"

"Because he was killed and I am still alive. I ought to have sacrificed myself for him in his life-time"

Moawiya saw that he was not getting what he had aimed at. On the other side, he also wanted to hear about the character and life of Ali from those who had been nearer to Ali and had lived with him day in and day out. Therefore, he asked Adi to narrate to him the character of Ali as he had seen it. Adi asked to be excused; but Moawiya insisted and then Adi said.

"By God, Ali was the most far-sighted and strong man. He talked with righteousness and decided the cases with clarity. He was an ocean of knowledge and wisdom. He hated the worldly pomp and show, and liked the solitude of night. He wept more (in love of Allah) and thought more (about Allah). In solitude, he scrutinized his own self and pitied about the past. He preferred short

clothes and simple life. Amongst us he was lice one of us. If we requested him for anything he granted our request. When we visited him he made us sit near him without keeping any distance. Inspite of all this humbleness, his presence was so awe-inspiring that we did not dare utter any words before him. He was so majestic that we could not look at him. When he smiled his teeth appeared like a string of pearls. He respected honest and pious people and was kind to indigent. Neither a strong man had any fear of injustice from him, nor a weak person ever lost hope of his justice. By God, one night I saw him standing in his place of worship when the dark night had engulfed everything; tears were rolling down on his face and beard; he was restless like a snake-bitten person and was weeping like a bereaved man."

"It seems as if even now I am hearing his voice as he was addressing the world: `O World, thou ist coming towards me and wantest to lure me? Go

deceive someone else. Thy time is not come. I have divorced thee thrice after when there is no return. Thy pleasure is valueless and thy importance insignificant. Alas! the provision is too little, the journey too long and there is no companion'.'

Hearing these worlds of Adi, Moawiya started crying, then wiping off the tears, he said:

"May God bless Abul Hassan (Ali). He was as you have said. Now tell me how do you feel without him?"

"I feel like a mother whose dear one is beheaded in her lap"

"Wouldn't you ever forget him?"

"Would the world allow me to forget him?"

THE RETIREMENT

The old man, a Christian by religion, had worked all his life; but had not been able to save anything for his old age. Lately he had become also blind. Old age, poverty and blindness had joined hands and he had no other way except begging. He used to stand at the corner of a lane for begging. People had compassion for him and gave him some alms from which he ate every day, and so he continued his sad life.

One day Ali, the Leader of the Faithfuls passed through the lane and saw the beggar in that condition. Ali, out of his concern for others, enquired about the old man. He wanted to know the factors which led him to that condition. "Had he no son to support him? Or, is there no other way for him to live a respectable life in his old age?"

The people who knew the old man came forward and informed Ali that he was a Christian and,

had worked hard so long as he had his eyes, and was young and strong. Now that he had lost his youth as well as his eyes he was unable to do any work; also he had no savings, so it was natural that he was begging. Ali said, "Strange! Till he had strength you extracted work from him and now you have left him on his own?" His story shows that he had worked when he had the strength. Therefore, it is the duty of the Government and the society to support him till he is alive. Go, and give him a life-pension from the State-treasury."

IN THE LAND OF MINA

The pilgrims had assembled in Mina. Imam Sadiq and his companions sitting in a place were eating some grapes placed before them.

A beggar appeared and asked for alms. The Imam took some grapes to give him, but he refused to accept it and asked for money. Imam told him to excuse him as he did not have money. The beggar went away disappointed.

After going a few steps he had second thoughts came back and asked for the same grapes. The Imam now refused to give him those grapes too.

Soon after, another beggar appeared. The Imam again took some grapes and gave to him. He accepted it and said, "Thanks to the Lord of universe who gave me my sustenance" On hearing these words, the Imam told him to wait and gave him two handfuls of grapes.

The beggar thanked God for the second time.

The Imam again told him to wait and then turning to one of his friends asked, "How much money is with you?" The man searched his pockets and produced nearly twenty Dirhams which he gave to the beggar at the order of the Imam.

The beggar thanking God for the third time said, "Thanks are exclusively to God. O God! Thou art the Bestower of the good, and thou hast no companion'." On hearing these words, the Imam took off his garment and gave it to the beggar. Now, the beggar changed his tone and spoke a few words of thanks to the Imam himself. Then the Imam did not give him anything and he went away.

His friends and companions who were present there said, "We thought that had the beggar continued thanking God in the same manner as before, the Imam would have continued giving him more and more. But when he cnanged his talk and praised

and thanked the Imam himself, the Imam did not continue his help.

THE PROTECTION THAT WAS REVOKED

Muslims had migrated to Abyssinia because of the torture and persecution by Quraish, but always anxiously waited for some news from their homeland. Those stand-bearers of Unity and justice of God (though an insignificant minority in comparison to the swarms of idolators who were bent upon maintaining statuesque in religion and social system) were confident that everyday their supporters were increasing and the rank of their adversaries was decreasing. They even hoped that soon the curtain of ignorance would be removed from the eyes of the non believers and the whole tribe of Quraish would embrace Islam, casting away their idols.

By chance a rumour took wings in their locality in Abyssinia that the whole Quraish had been converted to Islam. Though the news was not con firmed, but the refugees deep faith in their religion, and their strong expectation and hope in the ulti-

mate victory of Islam led a group of them to return to Mecca without waiting for the confirmation of the news from reliable sources. One of them was Othman bin Madh'un, the well-known companion of the Prophet who was extra-ordinarily attached to the Holy Prophet, and was greatly respected by all Muslims. When he reached near Mecca, he realised that the news was not correct; on the contrary, Quraish had intensified the torture and oppression of the Muslims. He was in a bad fix: He could not return to Abyssinia as it was far off; and if he entered Mecca,he would immediately become a target of the Quraish's torture. At last, an idea came into his mind. He thought of taking advantage of an Arabian custom by placing himself under the protection of one of the influential men of Quraish.

According to the Arab custom if a person would request an Arab for protection, he usually would grant his request and would protect him even at the cost of his own life. For an Arab, it was a shame if someone asked him for protection and he

did not grant that request eventhough he might be his enemy. So Othman entered Mecca at mid-night and went straight to the house of Waleed son of Mughira Makhzumi, a distinguished wealthy and influential Quraishite. He asked for his protection which was readily granted.

Next day, Waleed brought him to the Mosque and made a formal announcement before the elders of the tribe that from that moment Othman was under his protection, anyone doing anything against him would be considered going against Waleed personally. As Waleed was highly respected by Ouraish, nobody dared to trouble Othman any more. He was now a protected person. He moved freely as one of the Quraish attending their sittings.

But at the same time, the persecution of other Muslims continued unbated. It was hard on Othman, who was not happy at being Safe while his fellow Muslims continued to suffer. One day he thought to himself that it was not just on his part

to be safe under the protection of a pagan whereas his brethren were being persecuted. He came to Waleed and said:

"I am sincerely thankful to you. You gave me protection and saved me; but from today I want to go out from your protection, and join my friends. Let, whatever happens to them, happen to me"

"Nephew, perhaps you are not happy with me, or perhaps, my protection could not keep you safe"

"Why, I am not unhappy at all. But I don't want to live any longer under protection of anyone except God'."

"Since you have so decided, I would like you to come to the Mosque announce your going out from my protection, as I took you the first day there and announced your protection"

"Very well, no objection to it."

They came to the Mosque. When the elders had gathered, Waleed said: "Everybody should know that Othman has come here to announce his

exit from my protection"

Othman said: "He is right. I have come here with that very intention, and also to inform you that so long as I was under his protection, he protected me very well and I had no reason to complain. The reason for my going out from his protection is only that I don't like to live under the protection of anyone except God."

This is how the protective period came to end, and he lost his immunity from persecution. But he was still moving freely among Quraish as before.

One day, Labeed bin Rabia, the well-known poet of Arabia came to Mecca to recite his Qasida (poem) which he had recently composed, and which is now considered as a masterpiece and classics of the pre-Islamic period of Arabic literature.

The Qasida begins with the following line:

Know *(that Everything is null and void except God; nothing except Allah is Truth).* The Prophet had said about this line, "It is the truest poem has ever composed'."

Anyhow, Labeed came, Quraish gathered to hear such a great poet. There was a pin-drop silence to hear a reputedly best work of Labeed. He started recitation with manifest pride:

ألا كل شيء ما خلا الله باطل

(Know that everything is null and void except God).

Before he could recite the second line, Othman sitting in a corner said loudly: "Excellent, you have spoken the truth. It is the fact; everything except God is false."

Labeed recited the second line:

وكل نعيم لا محالة زائل

(And, without doubt all riches come to an end).

Othman cried, "But this is wrong. Not all riches are to come to an end. This is true only for the material riches of this world. The riches of the life hereafter are immortal and eternal:"

The people were surprised. No body had expected that a man who only a short while ago was under the protection of another person and who now had neither security of his life nor power of any wealth would dare criticising a poet of Labeed's stature in the gathering of chiefs and elders of the Quraish.

They requested Labeed to repeat the lines; the poet repeated the first line and again Othman said: "True, correct'." But when Labeed repeated the second line, Othman again said: "Wrong. It is not true; the riches of that world are not perishable"

This time Labeed himself felt most annoyed. He cried: "O people of Quraish! By God, your gatherings were not like this before. There were

not such rude and discourteous persons among you. How is it that now among you I find such persons?"

A man from the audience with the intention of pacifying hire and making him to continue his recitation, said affably: "Please, don't be angry to the talk of this man. He is crazy. And he is not alone. There is a group of some more crazy persons in this city. And they have the same belief as this fool. They have gone out from our religion and have chosen a new religion of their own"

Othman replied to that man forcefully. The man lost his temper; moved from his seat and slapped at the face of Othman, putting his full strength behind that slap. Othman got a black-eye.

Somebody said to Othman:

"Othman! you did not appreciate the value of the protection of Waleed. Had you still been

under his protection, your eye would not have become black."

"The protection of God is safer and more dignified than the protection of any other person. So far as my eye is concerned, the other eye also longs to attain the same honour in the way of Allah:"

Waleed came forward and said:

"Othman, I am ready to take you again under my protection:"

"But I have decided not to accept anyone's protection except that of God."

THE PRAYER THAT WAS GRANTED

"O God, Do not let me return to my family'." These were the words that Hind, the wife of Amr bin Jamuh, heard, from her husband when he left the house fully armed for participating in the battle of Uhud. It was his first time to fight alongwith the Muslims. He had not fought before as he was very lame, and according to the clear rule of the Qur'an Jihad (holy war against non-believers) is not incumbent upon those who are blind, lame or sick. Though he himself had not participated in Jihad but his four lion-hearted sons were always with the holy Prophet. Nobody had ever thought that Amr, inspite of his genuine excuse, and after sending four sons to Jihad, would want himself to be included among the soldiers of Islam.

When his relatives heard of his decision they came to persude him to change his mind. They said "First of all, you are exempted from Jihad, by rule

of "Shariat" (divine law). Secondly, you have four brave sons who are going with the Prophet. So, there is no need for you to go yourself."

He replied: "As my sons want to get eternal bliss and paradise, I too have the same desire. Will it not be strange if they go and achieve martyrdom while I sit in the house with you. No, it is not possible"

His relatives did not accept his views; and one after another came to him to persuade him. At last, he appealed to the Prophet:

"O Prophet of God! My relatives want to confine me in the house. They are not allowing me to participate in Jihad. By God it is my wish to go to paradise with this lame leg"

"O Amir! After all, you have a genuine excuse. God has exempted you. Jihad is not incumbent on you"

"O Prophet of God! I am aware of that. I know it is not incumbent upon me; even then........."

The Prophet said: "Do not forbid him from Jihad. Let him go. Since he has a desire for attaining martyrdom, God may bless him with it."

One of the most spectacular scenes of the battle-field of Uhud was the fighting of Amr bin Jamuh, who with his limping leg was attacking the centre of the enemy's army and was shouting, "I have the desire of paradise'." One of his sons was moving behind him. They fought gallantly till both were killed.

After the war ended, many Muslim women came out of Medina for getting correct news of the whole affair. They were anxious specially in view of the frightening news which had reached the city. Aysha, wife of the Prophet was one of them. When she came out of the city she saw Hind pulling the rein of a camel with three dead bodies on its back. Aysha asked:

"What is the news?"

"Thank God, the Prophet is safe. As he is

safe, I have no worries. The other news is that God has made the non-believers suffer a reverse with sorrow."

"Whose corpses are these?"

"They are my brother, my son and my husband."

"Where are you taking them?"

"I am taking them to Medina for burial."

Saying this, Hind pulled the rein of the camel towards Medina. But the animal seemed unwilling to proceed and finally sat down. Aysha said:

"The load seems heavy; he can't carry it"

"No. This camel of ours is very strong and usually carries the load of two camels. There must be some other reason."

Saying this she pulled the rein towards Medina; again the camel sat down. When she turned the camel towards Uhud, to her surprise the animal started walking quickly.

The situation was strange. She thought, "perhaps there is some mystery in it'." She then turned the animal towards Uhud and went streight to the Prophet:

"O Prophet of God! There is a strange story here. I placed these corpses to take them to Medina to bury them. When I pull the rein towards Medina, the animal refuses to obey me. But when I direct him to Uhud, he walks quickly."

"Did your husband say anything while coming to Uhud?"

"O Prophet of God! When he left the house, I heard him saying: `O God, Do not let me return to my family."

"Then this is the reason. The sincere prayer of this martyre has been granted. God does not want this corpse to return. There are men among you, Helpers of the Prophet, who if they ask anything from God, the Almighty God grants their wishes. Your husband was one of them."

On the advice of the Prophet, these men were buried in Uhud. Then, the Prophet turned to Hind and said:

"These men shall be together in that world"

"O Prophet of God! Pray to Almighty to keep me also with them:"

In those days, Kufa was the Capital and Centre of the Islamic Government. All eyes of the vast and wide Muslim nation (with the exception of Syria) were fixed at this city waiting as to what orders were being issued and what decisions taken.

Outside the City two gentlemen, a Muslim and the other from People of the Book (Jew, Christian or Zoroastrian) met on the road one day. The Mus lim was going to Kufa and the other gentlemen to another place nearby. Since a part of their journey was common, they decided to travel together.

On the way, they talked and talked on various topics of mutual interest and ultimately arrived at the point where their paths separated. The non-Muslim was surprised to see that his Muslim companion did not take the path leading to Kufa but accompanied him on the other path, where he was going. He asked:

"Well, didn't you say you were going to Kufa?"

"Yes"

"Then why are you coming this way? The other one is the path to Kufa'."

"1 know. I want to walk a few steps with you to see you off. Because our Prophet has said, `Whenever two persons travel together on the same path, they establish reciprocal rights upon each other. Now you have got a right upon me and for the sake of that right of yours I wish to walk a few steps with you, and then, of course, I shall return unto my own path."

"Oh! Such an authority and power which is weilded among people in such a perfect way by your Prophet, and the amazing speed with which his religion has spread in the world, must be, I am sure, because of his such noble character."

The surprise and admiration of this gentlemen reached its peak when he learnt afterwards that his Muslim friend was Ali bin Abi-Talib, the Caliph of that time. Soonafter he embraced Islam and was

counted among the most devout and selfsacrificing companions of Ali.

THE BLACK MARKET

The dependants of Imam Ja'afer Sadiq (a.s.) had increased in number; so had his expenses. The Imam decided to invest some money in trade to meet the increased expenses of the house. He arranged for an amount of thousand Dinars which he gave to his slave named 'Musadif' directing him to proceed to Egypt and to invest the amount in business on behalf of Imam.

Musadif purchased some goods usually exported to Egypt, and joined a Caravan of traders, who were taking the same type of merchandise to Egypt.

When they reached near Egypt, they met another Caravan coming out of the City. They enquired about each other's affairs. During the course of conversation, they learnt that the goods which Musadif and his friends were carrying were not available in Egypt and were in great demand

there. They became very happy at their good fortune. Indeed that was an article of common use and people had to buy it at all costs.

The traders on hearing the good news decided to exploit the situation. They agreed together not to sell the goods at less than hundred percent profit.

They entered the city. The situation was same as they had been told. As previously agreed, they created a black market, and did not sell the goods at less than double the cost.

Musadif returned to Medina with a net profit of one thousand Dinars. Happy as he was he went to Imam Sadiq, and placed before him two bags, each containing one thousand Dinars. The Imam asked

"What is this?"

"One of the two bags represents the capital

you gave me, and the other one (which is equal to the capital) is the profit I have made"

"Certainly the profit is unexpectedly high. Tell me how could you make so much profit?"

"The fact is when we learnt near Egypt that the merchandise we were carrying had become scarce there, we agreed not to sell the goods at less than double the cost; and we did accordingly'."

"Glory be to God! You did such a work! You took oath to create a black market among the Muslims! You swore not to sell the goods at less than double the actual cost! No. I don't want such business and such profit'."

Then picking up one of the bags, he said, "This is my capital." He did not even touch the other one, and said that he did not want to have any connection with that.

Then he said:

"O Musadif! It is easier to fight with a sword than to earn the livelihood lawfully."